



Media Release

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DATE: 30 September 2004

***photo opportunity – see below**

OFFICIAL OPENING OF SANCTUARY COURT, SKELLGARTH, RIPON

A once derelict and overgrown site in Skellgarths in the centre of the City of Ripon has been turned into good quality affordable homes; and the official opening ceremony of Sanctuary Court on Tuesday, 5 October will mark the culmination of four years of partnership working between Harrogate Borough Council, North Yorkshire County Council, Sanctuary Housing Association and the Housing Corporation.

The site, previously in the ownership of North Yorkshire County Council, was first identified as having potential for affordable housing in 1999. It was subsequently offered to Sanctuary Housing Association to provide low cost homes for rent for single people and couples. Included within the development are two flats providing supported housing for young people leaving care. Nominations for the remaining six properties come from Harrogate Borough Council's housing waiting list.

At a total development cost of approximately £500,000, funding was provided by Harrogate Borough Council, the Housing Corporation and Sanctuary Housing Association.

Councillor Jean Butterfield, Harrogate Council's Cabinet Member for Housing, said: "Sanctuary Court is a wonderful development, providing some very nice city-centre accommodation at affordable rents in an area of high demand. It brings the total of affordable homes completed in the district in the last five years to 643 with a further 68 on site. The development at Skellgarths has regenerated a prominent, yet derelict site, in the city's conservation area which was identified for environmental improvement within the Harrogate District Local Plan.

"But its development into two smart apartment blocks was not always straightforward, due largely to its restricted nature. The need for an archaeological survey, high specifications for elevations and boundary treatments and works to stabilise the boundary wall all added to the scheme cost.

"But, overall, its development is testimony to the very real benefits that can be achieved through partnership working."

PHOTO OPPORTUNITY: Councillor Mrs Margaret-Ann de Courcey-Bayley, Mayor of the Borough of Harrogate, will perform the opening ceremony at 11.30 am on Tuesday, 5 October 2004, Sanctuary Court, Skellgarths, Ripon.

FURTHER INFORMATION: Councillor Jean Butterfield is available for comment on 01423 770381. Further technical information is available from Jenny Wood, Development Officer, Department of Health and Housing on 01423 556891.